



DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE

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BISHOP NAMED FOR ENGLISH DIOCESE IN EUROPE

LONDON -- The February sessions of the Church of England's General Synod gave final approval to a diocese in Europe and in August the Rt. Rev. John Satterthwaite, 54, the present Bishop of Fulham and Gibraltar, was named as its bishop.

The Bishop, who was General Secretary of the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations from 1959 to 1970 and General Secretary of the Archbishop's Commission on Roman Catholic Relations from 1965 to 1970, is among other things an honorary canon of the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht.


Even prior to the Reformation there were English congregations in Europe. In 1633 they came under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London.

Today, because of the European Common Market, the number of English-speaking residents of Europe has reached an all-time high -- an estimated 250,000. There are now 180, sometimes tiny, self-supporting English congregations scattered throughout 40 countries in a triangular area from Norway to Russia, Greece and Spain. There are also chaplaincies in Turkey, Morocco, the Canary Islands, and Madeira.

These congregations are pastored by about 200 priests, recruited not only from England but also Australia, Canada, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The decision of General Synod of the Church of England has the effect of transferring jurisdiction from the bishop of London to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The bishop of the new diocese is to be a member of the English House of Bishops and representatives of the diocese will have a place on the Church of England General Synod. The responsibility for the cost of training priests will be taken over by the Church of England.

The concept of a Church of England diocese in Europe was first suggested in the 1930s. Since 1970 oversight of the churches has been the responsibility of a single bishop. This has brought together the churches of northern and central Europe and those which were in the diocese of Gibraltar formed in 1842.



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As Bishop of Fulham and Gibraltar since 1970 -- Fulham being simply a title -- Bishop Satterthwaite has travelled nine months in the year serving his far flung churches. He averages 50-55,000 miles a year and is assisted by Bishop Ambrose Weekes.

He told a press conference following his appointment that he had three major priorities: to look after the needs of his clergy, to make certain that they are preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments properly, and developing friendly relations with other Christians.

On the Anglican side, this involves relationships with the Lusitanian Church in Portugal which in July became a full member of the Anglican Communion, the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church which does the same later this year, and the six American Churches in Europe with their bishop, the Rt. Rev. John M. Krumm, based in Paris.

At a wider level it involves contact with Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church leaders. The bishop is proud of the achievements of his diocese in this field, especially in the sharing of church buildings. This is especially important during the holiday season. At Costa del Sol, for example, there can be up to 30,000 English speaking people on holiday and these are served by Anglican priests in Roman Catholic buildings.

He puts the cordial state of relations with other churches down to the fact that the English churches have adopted a firm "no sheep stealing" policy.

Among other things the new diocese boasts perhaps the biggest prison chaplaincy service in the Church of England. The bishop admitted that arrests for possessing and taking drugs among English-speaking visitors to Europe had increased alarmingly.

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